


Ancient Mithila University

Ancient Mithila University was an ancient [university](#) and was famous for Nyaya Shastra and logical sciences.

<div> <div>Mithila University</div> <div>प्राचीन मिथिला विश्वविध्यालय</div> </div>	
<div>  <div>Brahmanical Seat of Learning</div> </div>	
Alternative name	Nyaya School of Indian Philosophy
Location	Mithila
Region	Mithila
Part of	Ancient Universities in Indian Subcontinent
History	
Founded	Janaka
Cultures	Hinduism

Background



Philosophical Conversation between Ashtavakra and the King Janaka of Mithila - Ashtavakra Gita

It was gradually started from the philosophical conferences held by Janaka, the king of Mithila at his court. These philosophical conferences led to the formation of a seat of learning and this seat of learning converted into the university of Mithila. It was the prominent seat of [Brahmanical](#) system of education.^{[1][2][3][4][5][6][7]} Mithila is the seat of Maithil Brahmin. From ancient times, Maithil Brahmins had given different dimensions to the ancient Indian Philosophy. Nyaya Shastra, Tarka Shastra, Mimamsa and Shankhya Shastra were mostly emerged from Mithila.^[8] Uddalaka Aruni discovered the theory of three elements of the life. Ashtavakra taught King Janaka the [metaphysical](#) nature of existence and the meaning of individual freedom. The philosophical conversation between Ashtavakra and Janaka is recorded as ancient philosophical texts known as [Ashtavakra Gita](#) or Ashtavakra Samhita.^[9] Similarly Yajnavalkya taught [Brahman Vidya](#) to the King Janaka.^[10] Yajnavalkya is the author of [Satapatha Brahman](#) and is considered as the Father of Indian philosophy. Gargi Vachaknavi was a [Brahmavadini](#). She composed several hymns in the Rig Veda that questioned the origin of all existence. She was honoured as one of the Navaratnas (nine gems) in the court of King Janaka of Mithila. She took part in the Shastrarth with Yajnavalkya, in which she asked some questions related to the foundation of the existence of the nature. Yajnavalkya answered all her questions.^[11] Maitreyi was another [Brahmavadini](#) who lived during the later [Vedic period](#) in ancient India. She is mentioned in the [Brihadaranyaka Upanishad](#) as one of two wives of the Vedic sage Yajnavalkya. She was [Advaita](#) philosopher. In the Rigveda about ten hymns are attributed to Maitreyi. She explores the Hindu concept of [Atman](#) (soul or self) in a dialogue contained in the [Brihadaranyaka Upanishad](#). The dialogue, also called the Maitreyi-Yajnavalkya dialogue, states that love is driven by a person's soul, and it discusses the nature of [Atman](#) and Brahman and their unity, the core of [Advaita](#) philosophy. She is estimated to have lived around the 8th century BCE. Aksapada Gautama founded Nyaya Shastra. [Mandana Mishra](#) (8th century CE) was a Hindu philosopher who wrote on the [Mīmāṃsā](#) and Advaita systems of thought. He was a follower of the Karma Mimamsa school of philosophy and a staunch defender of the holistic [sphota](#) doctrine of language. He was a contemporary of [Adi Shankara](#). Maṇḍana Miśra is known to be a student of a mimamsa scholar [Kumarila Bhatta](#), but who also wrote a work on Advaita, the Brahma-siddhi. He is best known as the author of the Brahmasiddhi. In the 9th to 10th century, [Vācaspati Miśra](#) was philosopher of [Advaita Vedanta](#) and wrote one non-commentary, Tattvabindu, or Drop of Truth, which focuses on [Mīmāṃsā](#) theories of sentence meaning. In the 14th century, Vidyapati emerged as [Maithili](#) and [Sanskrit](#) poet, composer, writer, courtier and royal priest in [Mithila](#). He was a devotee of Shiva, but also wrote love songs and devotional Vaishnava songs. He knew Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsha, and Maithili.^{[12][13]}

History



Gurukul in Ancient India (प्राचीन भारतीय गुरुकुल)

This university was very famous for its Nyaya Shastra. Nyaya Shastra was founded by Aksapada Gautama. It was later developed by Gangeśa Upadhyay. From 12th century to 15th century, it was important center for learning and cultures.^[14] In Kamesvara period Jagaddhara was a scholar, who wrote commentaries on a variety of subjects, such as the [Gita](#), [Devimahatmya](#), [Meghaduta](#), [Gita Govinda](#) and Malati Madhava and others as well as wrote original treatises on erotics such as Rasika Sarvasva, Sangita Sarvasva. Similarly Sankara Misra was another scholar who worked on the [Vaisheshika](#), the Nyaya and the [Smrti](#).^[15] Vasudeva Sarvabhauma, the famous logician of Nadia, received his education at Mithila in the 15th century. In the 15th century, Raghunath Siromani, was the head of the university. At that time this university was also known as Mithila Vidyapeeth.^[16] According to the [scholars](#) and [historians](#) of Maharajadhiraja Lakshmishwar Singh Museum and Maithili Sahitya Sansthan, the university of Nalanda and Vikramshila were destroyed by [Mughal](#) Emperors because these universities were organised at particular places. But to destroyed the university of ancient Mithila was not so easy because it was spread out in many [Ashram](#) or [Gurukul](#) of the different ancient [philosophers](#) or sages of Mithila. So this university remained till the 20th century.^[17] According to Abul Fazal during the reign of [Shah Jahan](#), Mithila became famous for its scholars and poets who received rewards from the Emperor for their scholarship. In the 16th century, Mithila emerged as the chief centre of both secular and religious learning. Sanskrit scholars from different parts of India came to Mithila to study Hindu Philosophy.^{[18][19]} In Mughal period, Raghunandan Dasa was an eminent intellectual of the university. Mughal Emperor [Akbar](#) was very influenced by him, so he gifted him the entire Mithila as a gift. But Raghunandan Dasa later offered it to his Guru Mahesh Thakur as

Guru Dakshina. Mahesh Thakur established [Darbhanga Raj](#) Kingdom on the day of Ram Navami in 1557 AD.

Examination System

The name of the examination of this university was known as 'Salaka Pariksha'. It was examined by Dvara-Panditas (who were considered the most learned and revered of the scholars at that time) .^[20] In this examination candidate have to explain the portion of the page in a manuscript which is pierced by a needle. This examination was for candidates to complete graduation certificate. There was more tough level of examination than Salaka Pariksha in which candidate is required to present himself in the examination by the public. This latter examination was known as 'Sadayantra'. The scholar or candidate in this examination could be asked to any question on any topic by the people they liked. After passing this Sadayantra test, scholars were honoured by three different classifications Upadhaya, Mahopadhaya and Mahamahopadhaya according to the level of knowledge. These honours were much coveted among the scholars.^[21]

Education system and Curriculum

The educational system of Mithila University was very strict. According to historian John Keay, no one was allowed to copy the Texts of the university to outside the university. One has to only remember the texts.^[22] The minimum period of studentship of this university was twelve years. After that student continue postgraduate studies and teaching. The ideal qualities of the students of the university were qualities of calmness (santa), self-restraint (danta), self-denial (uparata) and patience (titiksha).

Astrology and Astronomy in Mithila



Vidyapati (विद्यापति) - One of the Maithil Intellectuals in the 14th century

There were many astronomers and astrologers who flourished [astronomy](#) and [astrology](#) in the ancient Mithila. Varunci composed Bhargavamuhurta in the 11th century. In the 13th century, Harinatha wrote Sanketakakaumudi while his work on Phalita-Jyotisa. He is also the author of Smritisara. Similarly Dhiresvara wrote Buddhipradipa which deals with the calculation of the auspicious day and night. In the 14th century, Jivesvara (son of Dhiresvara) wrote Ratnasataka which is a muhurtagrantha. Haradatta (son of Devaditya) wrote Daivajnabandhava and Gatinamamala. Candessvara (son of Viresvara) wrote on Jyotisa known as Krtiyacintamani. In 15th century, Ganapati Thakur father of [Vidyapati](#) wrote two works on Jyotisa known as Bhumibrahamana and Gangabhaktitarangni. Vidyapati wrote Jyotisadarpana. MM Paksadhara (son of MM Vatesvara) was the colleague of Vidyapati wrote two works on Jyotisa known as Subhodh and Tithicandrika. Haripati (son of Vidyapati) wrote Vyavaharapradipika which is preserved in [Kameshwar Singh Darbhanga Sanskrit University](#) and Mithila Research Institute at [Darbhanga](#). Narahari wrote Svarodayatika and Ahibalacakra on [Jyotisa](#). Madhusudana wrote Jyotisapradipankura which is preserved in [India Office Library, London](#). Laksmidasa Misra (son of [Vachaspati Misra](#)) wrote an exposition on Siddhantasiromani known as Ganitatattavacintamani. It contains of 7500 verses. Vibhakara wrote Prasanakaumudi who was also a Justice in the court of King Ramabhadra Simha. In the same time, Parama Misra wrote Mukundavijaya. Nanhidatta wrote Balabodhini which was a booklet for beginners. MM Srinivasa wrote Suddhidipika. MM Mahesha Thakur, the founder of [Raj Darbhanga](#) wrote Aticaradinirnaya. [\[23\]](#)

Birth of Nabadwip University

Gangesa Upadhyay of Mithila and Raghunatha Shiromani of Nabadwip developed a new version of Nyaya Shastra known as Navya Nyaya School of Indian Philosophy to combat with the logic of Buddhism Philosophy and to defeat them to minimise Buddhism influence. They established a new university for Hindu philosophy at Nabadwip(Nadia district) known as Nabadwip University or Nadia University.^{[24][25]} Vasudeva Sarvabhauma was once prevented from copying the texts of Mithila University, then he committed to memorize the whole parts of Tattav Chintamani and the metrical part of Kusumanjali. He then wrote down the texts at Nadia, which he memorized and helped in establishment of the new university at Nadia. Mahamahopadhyaya Gokulnath (1650-1750) was the scholar of Mithila migrated to Nadia to contribute in the establishment of new school of logic known as 'Navya Nyaya'. This led to the decline of the reputation and importance of Mithila. From here Nadia emerged as second center of learning of Hindu Philosophy.

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